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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT Thursday, December 3, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "More Questions." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. D.A.

Bulletins available: "Stain Removed from Fabrics."

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If my conversation begins to wander for one minute today, if I start slipping away from the subject in hand, somebody stop me please. My intentions are entirely businesslike. You would understand why if you could see the pile of letters lying here before me. There are so many to answer that I haven't time to let my mind slide off on any other subject. Thursday, you know, is my pet day for questions and answers, so here we go.

First question: "Please, Aunt Sammy, tell me how to reduce successfully. I'm twenty pounds overweight and I just can't seem to get thinner."

Second question: "How can I put on some pounds? My doctor says I need to gain but I'm eating more than I have an appetite for now."

Those two requests deserve a whole morning's discussion to themselves. There's a great deal to be said on this matter of weight. It isn't important just for the sake of looks either. Long life and good health may depend on weight. So tomorrow, if you're listening, you shall hear the latest news from the nutrition specialists about eating to gain or lose.

The next question is about mushrooms. Some lucky people I've known can go out and over the back fence and pick mushrooms in the pasture lot. Other people, even luckier, have them growing right in their own backyards. I wonder whether mushrooms grow in the backyard along Euclid Avenue in Syracuse, New York. I strongly suspect it, because here's a letter from a lady who lives there and who asks how to can mushrooms at home in small quantities. Of course, I'm sending her the canning bulletin. Full directions on page twenty for canning mushrooms either in glass jars or tin cans. Here's the way that useful bulletin advises canning them: First, you wash the mushrooms and peel them. Next, you drop them into water containing a little vinegar. The proportions are 1 tablespoon of vinegar to each quart of water. Next, precook the mushrooms by placing them in a wire sieve or colander, covering them with a lid and immersing them for 3 to 4 minutes in boiling water containing vinegar and also salt. A tablespoon of vinegar and a teaspoon of salt to every quart. Now pack the mushrooms in the containers and cover them with freshly boiling water. Add a teaspoon of salt to each quart. Process the jars in the pressure cooker. For quart glass jars process at 10 pounds pressure for 35 minutes. Since this lady who wrote the letter asks how to can them in small quantities, she will probably be using

small cans or pint glass jars. Process pint glass jars and No. 2 and No. 3 tin cans at 10 pounds pressure for 25 minutes.

A housekeeper in St. Paul writes that she unfortunately got some paint on her new enamel stove while the kitchen was being painted. She tried to get the paint off with steel wool but this scratched the enamel. How to remove the paint without the enamel? I'd suggest trying to dissolve the paint spots with turpentine or alcohol. Rub a little on with a cloth and see how it affects the stove. In using any substance like this of course, care must be taken to avoid any danger of fire. See that the stove is out and that there are no lighted matches or any open flame in the room while you are working.

This same housekeeper asks how to remedy some linen that has become mildewed. About a month or so ago, if you remember, we had a long chat on what to do for mildew. The booklet on stain removal, which I mention so often, also has a great deal of helpful advice on the subject. It gives six remedies for mildew stains, depending on the material and how severely this mold has set in. Mildew grows on fabrics that have been allowed to remain damp for some time. The spots may be of various colors but often are grayish green, brown or almost black. The growth is merely upon the surface of the material at first, but if it is allowed to continue, it attacks and destroys the fiber itself. If the stains are very fresh, they can usually be washed out with soap and water. Drying in the sun helps to bleach them. Slight stains can be soaked in sour milk overnight and then placed in the sun without rinsing. Repeat the treatment several times if necessary. Or, with white fabrics, lemon juice can be used on slight stains. Moisten the spots with lemon juice, put salt on and allow them to remain in the sun. For old and persistent stains, try potassium permanganate or Javelle water or a ten percent solution of oxalic acid.

Here's a man who writes to ask what foods are high in iron. A wise man, I judge from that question. My private opinion is that many men aren't interested enough in scientific information about food. Most of us need to keep an eye on this matter of getting enough iron in our diets. Iron helps make good red blood, something we all need, especially with a long winter ahead.

The animal foods that are high in iron are: eggs, especially the yolks; meats particularly liver, kidney, brain and heart, also the lean muscle of beef, veal, pork and lamb; and oysters and shrimps.

The vegetable foods that are high in iron are, first and foremost, the green leafy vegetables. Turnip and beet tops, chard, dandelion and mustard greens, watercress and spinach and kale. Also broccoli leaves.

Next in iron content come the dried fruits, particularly apricots, peaches, currants, dates, figs, prunes and raisins.

Then, the whole-grain flours or cereals, especially wheat, barley, rye and oats. Molasses, sorghum and cane syrups are also high in iron. Then there are the legumes--either fresh or dried lima beans, lentils, kidney beans, cowpeas and common peas. And nuts, particularly almonds and hazel nuts, walnuts, pecans and hickory nuts.

Now a few questions about making cake.

"What makes a cake crack on top?"

Answer: One of three things makes a cake crack open on top: Too much flour, too little liquid, or too hot an oven. In general, there are five causes of any cake failure. First, a poor recipe. Second, incorrect measuring of ingredients. Three, uneven blending of these ingredients. Four, beating the batter too long. Five, incorrect baking time and temperature.

"What makes a cake fall?" asks somebody else.

Answer: A cake may fall because it contains too much fat, too much sugar, too much baking powder, too much beating, or is baked for too short a time.

"How do you know when a cake is done?" One indication is that it shrinks from the sides of the pan. Another is pressing the cake gently on top with the finger. If it springs back into place, it is done. You can test it with a clean broom straw or a toothpick, or some of the cake testers sold for the purpose. Insert the tester in the cake to the center. If it comes out clean with no batter clinging to it, the cake is done.

Here's another good question from another wise listener.

"What can I eat to prevent colds?"

A regular, well-balanced diet day in and day out is the biggest help. Emphasis should be on green leafy vegetables, plenty of fruit, including citrus fruit or tomatoes, milk, whole grain bread and cereals and, of course, cod-liver oil. And I don't need to add, do I, that exercise in the open air and sufficient sleep in a well-ventilated room are also aids to good health and to digesting and assimilating that well-balanced diet.

That's about enough questions for today, don't you think? But here's an interesting bit of news I learned the other day. It's about a nut that isn't a nut. The cashew nut, which was comparatively unknown a few years ago, now rivals the walnut and pecan in popularity and may be bought in almost any drug or grocery store. Last year the country consumed more than five million pounds of cashews. However, specialists say that the cashew nut is not really a nut, but rather the seed of a fleshy fruit borne in clusters on a large evergreen tropical tree. Curiously the seed is attached to the outside at the lower end of the fruit. The cashew tree thrives in Porto Rico and other West Indian islands. A few trees have been fruited in Florida.

Tomorrow, then, some news for stouts and thins.